

**RESOLUTION 2012-05**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF LAKE WALES, POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA, REQUESTING THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO CONSIDER LANDSCAPING THE OPEN AREAS AT THE INTERSECTION OF STATE ROAD 60 AND U.S. HIGHWAY 27 TO BEAUTIFY THE INTERSECTION OF THESE TWO MAJOR HIGHWAYS IN THE CITY OF LAKE WALES.**

**WHEREAS**, U.S. Highway 27 and State Road 60 are two major Florida highways that intersect in the City of Lake Wales; and

**WHEREAS**, the intersection of the highways is a gateway to Lake Wales and is highly visible to traffic going north-south and east-west on the highways; and

**WHEREAS**, the intersection is devoid of landscaping and is unattractive, as illustrated in the photo attachment; and

**WHEREAS**, the Lake Wales Economic Development Plan, jointly prepared and adopted by the City Commission and the Chamber of Commerce specifically cites beautification of the intersection as a priority in attracting business to the community; and


**WHEREAS**, the City's Parks and Community Appearance and Advisory Board identified beautification of the intersection as a key component in the overall effort to improve the appearance of the community; and

**WHEREAS**, the "Bold Vision for Florida's Highway Beautification Program" set forth under Governor Rick Scott calls for the state's Department of Transportation to plant large trees at "at the most highly traveled interchanges and gateways" in the state;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LAKE WALES, POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA** as follows:

The City Commission respectfully requests the Department of Transportation to consider landscaping the open areas at the junction of U.S. Highway 27 and State Road 60 in order to beautify this intersection of two major Florida highways.

**THIS RESOLUTION WAS INTRODUCED AND PASSED** by the City Commission of the City of Lake Wales, Florida, at its regular meeting on February 21, 2012.

  
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Mayor/Commissioner, City of Lake Wales

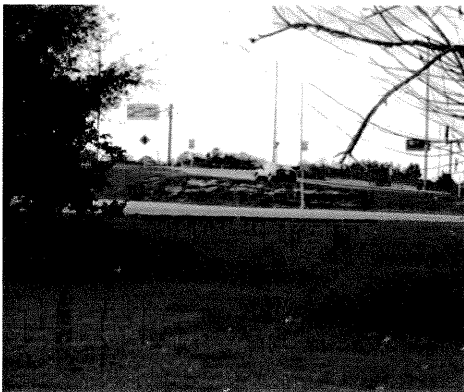
ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

**PHOTO ATTACHMENT  
RESOLUTION 2012-05**



2011 Aerial photograph of intersection of State Rd. 60 and U.S. Highway 27 in the City of Lake Wales.



DRAFT LETTER

February 21, 2012

Ananth Prasad, P.E., Secretary  
Department of Transportation  
605 Suwannee Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0450

Re: Landscaping of intersection – State Road 60 and U.S. Highway 27 in Lake Wales

Dear Secretary Prasad:

The attached resolution of the Lake Wales City Commission requests your Department's assistance in transforming the appearance of the crossroads of two major highways --- U. S. Highway 27 and State Road 60. Landscaping of the interchange would seem to be the perfect fit for the "Bold Vision for Florida's Highway Beautification Program" established by FDOT and Governor Rick Scott.

Currently, this high profile intersection is very bleak in appearance, as shown on the attachments to the resolution. The cloverleaf/ramp area north of SR 60, an open, grassy area of over ten acres with no landscaping, presents a dismal vista to travelers. There is ample room for trees that would greatly improve the appearance of the interchange for travelers on both SR 60 and US 27.

Under our economic development program, Lake Wales identifies itself as located at the "Crossroads of Commerce," referring to the intersection of the two highways. To encourage economic development, the city is engaged in a concerted effort to upgrade the appearance of the City. The code enforcement program has been reorganized and stepped up; a major renovation of the streetscape in the historic downtown was completed in 2011; a program of tree maintenance and plantings in the parks and along streets is in its fourth year; and the sign control program has been successful in removing a number of abandoned signs from commercial properties. In addition, the City is working closely with DOT on access control and beautification of the Scenic Highway (SR 17) corridor as part of the resurfacing of the Lake Wales segment of the highway planned for 2013.

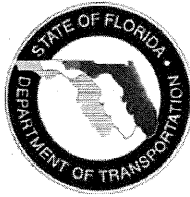
The City and Chamber of Commerce jointly adopted an economic development plan in 2011, a focus of which is to tackle priority community appearance issues. The "ugly" appearance of the SR 60/US 27 intersection is specifically called out in that plan.

Your consideration of our request would be greatly appreciated. Our Planning Director, Margaret Swanson, (863.678.4182 X714 or [mwsanson@cityoflakewales.com](mailto:mwsanson@cityoflakewales.com)) can be contacted for further information.

Sincerely,

Michael S. Carter  
Mayor

Cc: Randy Lachler, DOT Bartow  
Michael Schulte, DOT Bartow



## Florida Department of Transportation

Rick Scott  
Governor

605 Suwannee Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450

Ananth Prasad, P.E.  
Secretary

### Business of Beautification

*To me, in sum, beautification means our total concern for the physical and human quality we pass on to our children and the future.* Mrs. Lyndon Johnson, 1993

**Now** and for the next few years, to make Florida the most attractive place to do business, to attract visitors and businesses to invest more time and money in Florida, the Department can implement **bold** roadside beautification projects using many large trees, and few if any shrubs. With thoughtful site specific design, this *Consistent, Predictable, and Repeatable* approach will produce the highest visual impact and distinctive sense of place at the lowest design, construction, and maintenance cost. Ten, twenty, thirty, and forty foot tall or taller trees generously and safely placed at the most highly traveled interchanges and gateways into and through the state (Florida's most visible landscapes) will instantly create a welcoming and enjoyable experience; the first and lasting impression of the state and individual communities. Overstocked Florida based nurseries are discounting large trees by 50% or more, and in at least one case offering 0% financing. Palms, especially in Central and South Florida, are the state's signature trees; what visitors and investors expect to see, what they pay to see. Palms are the only type of trees that can feasibly and effectively be transplanted (and re-transplanted if need be) when mature. No other type tree can provide such instant impact, and be as resilient to Florida's extreme weather events. Each District, in conjunction with other agencies, can identify and program the ten highest priority roadside landscapes (e.g., state line, sea ports, airports, rail stations, scenic highways, beaches, historic sites, resorts, REDI communities, national parks and forests); where beautification is most able to help attract and grow



business. Decisions about the selection, placement, and care of trees can continue to be made with full participation of the local governments and maintaining agencies. Where necessary to fully implement highest priority projects, the Department can budget and accept responsibility for landscape maintenance.

**For the future**, as the economy strengthens and as the highest priority roadside landscapes are being completed, beautification can be routinely integrated into the processes used to plan, design, construct, and maintain roadways; roadways that accommodate **bold** performing landscapes that enhance private enterprise and public health and safety. Roadside landscape projects can mimic natural processes that manage stormwater, filter air, abate noise, shade pedestrians, conserve energy, provide habitat, *and* be beautiful. **Bold** leadership at all levels within the Department can make it possible to create and sustain memorable landscapes that contribute to the State's overall well being.

Emphasis can increase on conservation and management of existing trees, and planting roadsides with many small trees that will grow large. There can be less emphasis on planting large trees. Less expensive smaller trees and widespread planting of tree seedlings will grow quickly to beautify and reforest urban, suburban, and rural roadsides. Planting and managing a diverse community of native and non-native tree species reinforces the **bold** landscapes already in place, and helps overcome other design, construction, and maintenance challenges. This simple and sound investment approach grows in value and pays meaningful environmental and economic dividends indefinitely, unimpeded by current or future recessions.

***Let's get to work*** making beauty *everyone's* business at the Department of Transportation. A work plan developed by the District Landscape Architects and Managers describes strategies, tactics, and measures that can, upon implementation, increase and sustain the return on Florida's investment in highway beautification.

Work Plan Highlights:

- Strengthen the Department's Highway Beautification Policy to show renewed commitment.
- Increase landscape expertise in each District planning, design, construction, and maintenance office
- Address landscape conservation and improvements early in roadway planning, project development, and design (including drainage, utilities, ped/bike). The roadway design needs to safely accommodate the landscape design.
- Develop landscape project performance measures and targets tied to other department programs (safety, pedestrian and bicyclists, safe routes to schools, accessibility, drainage, transit, maintenance).
- Document the direct economic benefits of each landscape project, including number of full-time and part-time employees, suppliers, nurseries, etc.
- Develop system to track and monitor landscape projects over time and space. Create a report card for landscape projects with annual report cards on how the project matured and the cost and quality of care. Document what has been invested, where, and how the investment is growing.

- Utilize landscape projects to enhance mobility and safety, e.g., midblock crossing, delineation, headlight glare, traffic calming, etc.
- Upgrade online resources for landscape stakeholders. Include instruction and information about roadside landscape design, construction, and maintenance.
- Emphasize "right plant in right place", "sustainable", and "non-invasive" as well as "native".
- Establish specifications and method of payment for landscape soil to be placed during roadway construction and for soil replacement when necessary during landscape construction.
- As stand-alone projects, enhance oversight during landscape construction:
  - Develop process for maintaining agency to participate in final acceptance.
  - Revise inspection reports to include mulch, weeds, litter, etc.
  - Develop minimum education and experience requirements for landscape CEI.
  - Authorize post design services for RLA of record.
  - Develop process to pay contractor during establishment periods
- Improve landscape maintenance. Determine design life of the landscape project, and who and how maintenance will be paid for the duration. During design, establish a maintenance cost limit that cannot be exceeded. Review and approve landscape maintenance plans and projected annual maintenance costs before completing design. Determine if investment on front end can save on long term maintenance. Reconfirm agreements *before* installation. Develop and retain expertise in the art and science of tree care, roadside forestry, land and landscape management for safety, value, beauty, and soil and water quality.
- Develop programmatic landscape recommendations and requirements to minimize maintenance, e.g., large trees widely spaced with few shrubs to accommodate large machine mowing. Establish design guidelines for low and high maintenance commitments.
- Publish online photo gallery of successful landscape projects.
- Include landscape quality in customer satisfaction surveys.
- Explore opportunities for public private partnerships for landscape design, construction, and maintenance.